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attention at the time of its discovery in 1892, when it was visible to the unaided eye. Its situation was practically as favorable for observation at this appearance as in 1892-93, and yet it has not been brighter than the 14th magnitude.

Perihelion was passed on April 28th. The last observation at Mt. Hamilton was on December 24th.

Comet ϵ (1899 V) was discovered by M. GIACOBINI, at Nice, on September 29th. It was then of about the 11th magnitude. Perihelion was passed on September 15th, at a distance of one hundred and sixty-five million miles. Its brightness has decreased slowly. At the last observation, of December 23d, it was estimated to be of the 13th magnitude. It is now too near the Sun to be observed, but will in all probability be bright enough to be observed with large instruments in February or March.

C. D. PERRINE.

1900, January 20.

NOTE ON THE SPECTRUM OF COMET a 1899 (SWIFT).

The spectra of the brightest comets of 1898 and 1899 were carefully observed at the Lick Observatory by Mr. WRIGHT. His paper describing the results is published in the *Astrophysical Journal* for October, 1899. One fact established by the observations of SWIFT's Comet (1899 a) seems to me to be of great interest and importance.

Mr. WRIGHT's photograph of the spectrum records some fifteen bright lines, of which the lines at wave-lengths 4052, 3880, and 3870 are the strongest. "In the spectrum of the nucleus λ 4052 is fully as bright as λ 3870, but the latter line extends out into the comet's head more than four times as far as the former. In fact, the lines $\lambda\lambda$ 3870 and 3880 experience only a gradual increase in brightness in the region of the nucleus, and extend the entire length of the slit. In the cases of all the other lines, the change is quite abrupt. This must be taken to indicate a marked difference between the spectrum of the nucleus and the spectra of the outer parts of the head."

The lines at $\lambda\lambda$ 3870 and 3880 are due to cyanogen.

It seems not too much to hope that this beginning in detecting differences in the spectra of different parts of comets may, in the case of very bright comets, be extended over larger areas and in greater detail; leading, as in the case of the Sun, to a better understanding of their condition and constitution.

W. W. C.